THE PROPOSAL REJECTED. CORRESPONDENCE ON THE SUBJECT.

The President of the United States transmitted to the Senate on Thursday last the subjoined Diplomatic Correspondence, in answer to a resolution of that body requesting information on the subjects therein discussed.

> DEPARTMENT OF STATE. WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 12, 1863.

To the President of the United States :

The Secretary of State, to whom was referred the reso lution of the Senate of the 10th instant, requesting the President, if not in his judgment incompatible with the public interests, " to lay before the Senate any correspondence which has taken place between this Government and the Government of France on the subject of mediation, or other measures looking to the termination of the existing civil war," has the honor to lay before the Presitent a copy of the correspondence called for by the said Respectfully submitted, WILLIAM H. SEWARD. Mr. Dayton to Mr. Seward .- [Extract.]

PARIS, NOVEMBER 18, 1862. Six: Herewith I enclose to you the copy of a com nication just mailed to Monsieur Drouyn de L'Huys.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,
WILLIAM L. DAYTON.

Mr. Dayton to M. Drouyn de L'Huys.

PARIS, NOVEMBER 16, [17,] 1863 MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE: In a recent conversation had with your Excellency, you asked some questions in relation to the population of the Southern States of the United States, and the position of the several divisions of our descriptions. This, in connexion with a statement in your de spatch of the 30th October to his Majesty's Ambassadors at London and at St. Petersburgh, officially published, in duced me to make you this communication.

Although that despatch was not addressed to me or to

my Government, yet it so intimately concerns the latter that I am sure I shall be excused if I refer to it in consection with the subject-matter of your conversation. I do this not with a view to any criticism on the expression of any opinions beyond those already given by me, but to correct, so far as I can, what seems to me a misapprehen-sion of facts. I do this in the hope that, should the question present itself for consideration in the future, your Excellency may be induced to review your opinion as to the strength of the parties involved in the war now existing in

the United States. Your Excellency says "There has existed between the belligerents, from the very outset of the war, an equality of strength which has been almost constantly maintained ever since; and after so much bloodshed, they are now in this respect, very nearly in the same position as at first. Nothing justines the expectation of any more decided military operations at an early day.

In answer to your questions in our conference of the 11 h instant, I cudeavored, with the aid of a map, to point out the districts of country occupied at present by the

out the districts of country occupied at present by the several divisions of our zriny.

If your Excellency can from memory recall these questions and compare them with the condition of this ga at "the very outset of the war," (or even as it has been within the past year,) you will find cause, I am sure, for grave doubt as to the accuracy of the opinion expressed in the above extract.

A little wave than a year ago the whole of the Slave

A little more than a year ago the whole of the Slave Slates south of the Potomac and Ohio and west of the Mississippi, thirteen in all, were in possession of the insurgents, except only a small locality in Virginia opposite to Washington. Washington: a tract of country in the same State, to the west of the Alleghany mountains, in which there was a mixed pursession; the nor hern parts of Kentucky, and perhaps one-half of Missouri. With these exception; they neld undisputed sway of the entire country of the South. They possessed, at the same time, the military arsenal at Harper's Ferry, and the west naval as small and dock Harper's Ferry, and the vast naval a senals and dock yerds at Norfolk and Pensucola. They had likewise pos session of the eastern shore of Chesapeake Bay, which, in connexton with the command of the Potomac, gave them control over the access by water to Washington, the capi tal of the nation They have lost during the year the east ern shore of the Chesapeake and the command of the Potomac, the city of Norfolk, with its arsen's and dockyards and neighboring country, and the dock- ard a Par ascola. They have lost all Virginia west of the Allein nies, Kentucky, and Missouri, and part of Tennessee, comprising, among other points, Nashville, the capital, and Memptis, its commercial port on the Mississippi. have lost every port, harbor, and fortification on the Atlantic coast of any value, (those at Charleston alone exceptpoint of Florids, and thence around the Gulf coast to

But, more important even than this, they have within the year lost New Orleans, the great commercial m-tropolis of the South, with the numerous fortifications established for its defence. They have likewise lost the Mis-sissippi, with every island and river fortification, (save that at Vicksburg) by which it was defended. This river, which drains the entire valley of the West, and cuts i two the Slave States from Cairo to the Gulf, and on which could float the navies of the world, which can reither be forded nor bridged, must forever separate the four Slave States and their contiguous territories on its west side from these on the east. The loss of this river was more injurious to the cause of the insurrectionists than the loss of many batties. Conscious that this would be so, it was fortified, your Excellency will remember, not only at its mouth and below, and at New Orleans, but at every available point upwards; yet it, with its many for-tifications; (Vicasburg alone except d,) has within the year been lost to the South The Tennessee and the Cumberland, great interior rivers of the West, with their de for ces and fortifications, have likewise been taken, after

a hard struggle, by the armies of the Union. In a word, the insurgents do not now hold a foot of ground which they did not hold early in the war, while the lag of the Union has been constantly savanced, and now floats somewhere on the soil or over the fortifications of every slave State, (save one) Their armies have in the mean time been driven from an area of country embracion in the aggregate not less than one hundred thousand square miles, and occupied by a population ranging from one million and a half to two millions of people.

But in war "equality in strength" consists not in these sings only. Permit me, therefore, to remind your Excollency that, while all the incipient efforts on the the routh to create a navy have been defeated and her vessels destroyed, the pavy of the United States has, within the year, grown from a very small to a very great power, closing the ports of the South, precluding, sare with our consent, all entrance to or exit from them, unless by st- aith et accdent. This power, which the South has little to sneet is almost exclusively the growth of the year, and on our own coxets and in the ports, harbors, and rivers of the South, it cannot but be in the future a most efficient means

There are two other elements of strength which specially require consideration : mea and money. The armies of the South bave been large beyond example as compared with the extent of population from which they have been drawn. To raise them to their present standard, the conscription law of the South has embraced at from the age of eighteen to forty-five years. Their armies, like our own, waste away by the casualties of war, and there can be little force in reserve to supply the drain.

An examination of the preliminary report of the census of 1860 (of which I have had the honor to transmit you a c.py) will show, on page 131, that the hody of the population upon which the sou h must draw for the supply of this drain is less even than I suggested in our recept

The aggregate free population of all the Slave States, including Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri, is only 8,289,763; but from this must be de-ducted the population of those Slave States in the possession of the United States, where no conscription law of the South could possibly be enforced, and likewise the free blacks of the South, in whose hands they dare not place arms. The free population of those States, shown by the ceneus of 1860, is as follows: Delaware, 110,418; Maryland, 599,860; Kentucky, 930,201; Missouri, 1,087,081; Kanawha, or Western Virginia, with Jefferson, Accomand Northampton counties, estimated at 379,774; free blacks of the South to be deducted, 250,787—making ar aggregate of 3,338,121, which number, deducted from the

eggregate free population of the couth, leaves only 4,951,642, including men, women, and children. The general accuracy of these figures can readily be trated by reference to pages 131 and 256, 287, 268, and 289, 6 the secretary of the secretar 289 of the census report before referred to. It is true that to some slight extent troops may coluntarily go into Southern army from portions of the country not in their possession, but these would probably be at least belauced by these withholding themselves along the coasts and in the towns and cities of the South subject to our control, and for which so allowance is made in the above

I need not recapitulate the population of the Free States and of the Bo der States in our possession. The aggregate, by a reference to the same census report, will be seen to be within a fraction of twenty two millions, (21,996,845.) During the last summer, in addition to the army then in the field, they raised, within the space of two months, principally by voluntary collistment, az hundred thousand men; and there is yet another, and still another army in the reserve, as I am instructed, to take their place,

in whole or in part, should that unhappily become ne

elaves of the South, as a source either of strength or weak-ness. As they have been u ed teretofore, they have cer tauly added strength to their masters. They have, in fact, fed the army. Some have been forced to labor with it in the trenches, while the great mass have toiled in the fields at home, thus leaving almost the entire population of the South free to fight its battles. Emercipation, should it occur, while it liberates the slave, would cut off this source of strength from their masters. Their supplies in the rear must be kept up, or their army cannot be held together: the one is essential to the maintenance of the other. A time may soon come, therefore, when, aside from the "ap-prehensions" incident to emine pation, the slaves of the South will be to their masters a source of weakness, and not of strength.

Permit me, however, here to add, that whoever may have entertained "spprehensions" of a "servile war, such I do not suppose for a moment to have been contemplated by the President in foreshedowing his policy of emancipation. The slaves of the South, scattered over a vast extent of country, have no arms, and no means of pro-curing them. They have little intelligence, no means of distant intercommunication, and can have no general con-cert of action. They may refuse to labor for their masters, and their masters cannot maintain them. The map with your Excellency, showing the per centage of slaves in each county of the South, will prove this beyond a ques-tion. In certain large sections of country, along the Mis-essippi more especially, there is about twenty-eight per cent only of white population. All the rest are slaves Of this population, the able bodied are now almost entire ly away with the army. Could attempts be made here or in other sections, to constrain the slaves to a force obedience, they may resist, or they may leave their planta-tions, as many have already done, and seek the friendly shelter of the Union flag. But neither principle nor poli-cy will induce the United States to encourage a "servile war" or prompt the slave to cut the throat of his master, or his master's family. The Government will not even permit, as I have already said to you, its own soldiers, or the soldiers of the enemy, acting as guerillas or marauders, belonging to no organized force, and under no regular flag. to make war, or attack even an armed enemy, withou unishment; still less would it encourage or permit slaves o offend against humanity, by attacks upon the feeble and helpless. That an isolated case or cases of wrong may occur in the course of establishing a great change (if such shall be established) in the social organization of the South, is not improbable; but in every such case I doubt not that the srm of the Government would promptly interfere to protect and to punish. This, however, is matter inci-dental only to the subject of my communication.

Leaving the question of population, I pass for a moment to the other great element of strength in war, and that is money. I have already said that the resources of the South in men would seem to be practically exhausted, and their resources in money, I think, must be equally so. I am instructed that, with a floating debt of four hundred millions of dollars, represented by paper at a discount of seventy-five per cent, they have neither raised nor have they the means of raising a revenue equal to ten millions, in any form or for any purpose. Want and distress are already dis-closing themselves in painful forms throughout the entire region occupied by the insurgents. On the other hand the Government of the United States has, as I am instruct ed, a revenue available in the precious metals of morthan a hundred millions, while its mines are yielding gold more rapidly than foreign trade withdraws it from the In this vital matter of figuree, therefore, there does not seem to exist between the parties an equality of strength. So far indeed as I can see, such equality has existed nowhere except on certain battle-fields, and especially between the two great armies in Virginia. Here the insurgents have advanced and retreated. They have gained battles and lost them. I do not mean to depreciate their gallantry. They are yet my countrymen. Here, at least, they have shown equality of strength, but every where else the permanent gain has been with the armies of the Union.

I avail myself of this occasion to renew to your Excellency assurances of the most distinguished consideration with which I have the honor to be your Excellency's very obedient servant, WILLIAM L. DAYFON.

Mr. Dayton to Mr. Seward .- [Extract.] PARIS, NOVEMBER 25, 1862. Sin: I received last night from M. Dronyn de L'Huys s

communication dated 231 instant, in answer to mine of the 17th instant, (dated by mistake the 16th.) The communication of M. de L'Huys is of so much in terest that I send you berewith a copy of the original and

I am, sir, your obedient servant. WILLIAM L. DAYTON. His Excellency WILLIAM H. SEWARD. Secretary of State.

Mr. L'Huys to Mr. Dayton .- [Translation] DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, Palace of Compeigne, Novem er 23, 1862.
Sin: I have learned with lively interest the information

which you have been pleased to communicate to me upon the respective situation of the two behigerents in the Uni-ted States. You express to me the hope that these suggestions may modify my opinion as to the equilibrium of strength bethey are certainly of a nature to make me appreciate all the resources of your Government. But it is none the less true that, notwithstanling the inequality of numbers and of financial means, notwithstanding local advantages and pertial conquests, the conditions of soil and of climate seem to oppose insuperable obstacles to the progress o the struggle, and that the equal energy of both sides tends to impress upon it a character of indomitable desperation. I am prepared to render homage with you to the courage which the Americans upon the one side and the other bave shown thus far; but this courage, even while it excites the admiration of the world, is only calculated to rend-r more

uncertain the result of the combats, and to retard the ter-mination of the disasters of this bloody war. You know, sir, what feelings this sad spectacle ha given rise to in us; you know the step which a profound sympathy for America has inspired in the Government of the Emperor, in the hope of opening a way to a reconciliation. This step you know also ought and could take place in the opinion of the Emperor only with the consent and concurrence of the two belligerent parties. At present the reception given to our proposition by the Cabinets of London and at. Petersburgh prevents us from thinking of pursuing it further; but I can assure you, sir, that our friendly dispositions have not changed. If some day the Americans, fired of turning their valor against themselves, Americane, area of turning toel vator against themselves, should wish to have recourse to us in order to seek in concert the means of terminating this conflict, they would find us always ready (be it in associating ourselves with other Powers, or be it reparately) to and them with our co-operation, and to tratify, by our good offices, feelings which have not ceased to animate France in regard to

Receise, sir, the assurances of my distinguished colderation.

DROUYN DE L'HUYS. Mr. DAYTON, Envoy Extraordinary, &c.

Mr. Seward to Mr. Dayton .- [Extract.] DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

Washington, November 28, 1862.

SIR: Your despatch of November 10th (No. 223) has been received only at this late day.

I have now only to say that the views presented by me a my despatch of October 20th are the deliberate and settled convictions of the Government, always to be expressed when, in your judgment, any expression whatever on the subject of the action of Foreign Powers shall be either

necessary or expedient.

In reply to a suggestion in your despatch, it is proper for me to say that neither M. Mercier nor any other person has had the jeast warrant from any authority of the United States for representing to his Government that the President would be disposed to entertain any proposition in regard to the scion of this Government in the conduct of our domestic affairs from any foreign quarter whatever. The exact contrary is the effect of all that has ever passed between all the Ministers residing here and this D. part-ment. You will Judge whether it is important to clear up

this point at Paris. l am, sir, your obedient servant,
WILLIAM H. SEWARD. WM. L. DAYTON, Esq., &c. &c.

Mr. Seward to Mr. Dayton .- [Extracts.] DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

Washington, November 30, 1862.

Sir: Your several despatches of November 12th, No. 224; November 13th, No. 225; November 14th, No. 226, have been received. I have also, by the aid of the telegraph, the substance of the invitation which was addressed by the Emperor of France to the Emperor of Ru sis and the Queen of Great Britain, to join in recommending an armistics in our civil war, together with the answers of those two sovereigns declining that invitation. In retwo sovereigns declining that invitation. In regard to the same subject my matructions will be very sim

ple and short.

An inconclus ve conference concerning the United States has been held between these Powers, all of whom avow themselves as friends of the United States, and yet the Juited States were carefully excluded from the conference Neither party in the conference proposed any combination to approx the will or control the poney of the United

Under these circumstances the United States are no Under these circumstances the United States are not called upon to say what they would have done if the proposition of France, which was declined by Russia and Great Britain, had been adopted and carried into effect. Nor are we called upon to discuss the propriety of the positions and proceedings respectively of the several parties in the conference. Such a dabate upon a subject which has already lost it practical character, or which, to speak more accurately, has not attained such a character, might produce irritations and jealousies which the Precident derepuguance of the United States to admit the intervention of France, which was declined by Russia and Great Eritain, had been adopted and carried into effect. Nor are we called upon to discuss the propriety of the positions and proceedings respectively of the several parties in the conference. Such a debate upon a subject which has already lost it practical character, or which, to speak more accurately, has not attained such a character, might produce irritations and jealousies which the President desires to avoid,

Acting on these principles, we shall ask no explanat nor shall we in any manner comment upon explanation which shall be voluntarily made. A Government which

conducting a great nation through a civil war must deal continually with new events as they arise, not with those which have already passed into history.

The United States has continually said to all Europe that they know that the saving of the American Union depends on the American people themselves, and not at all on the policies of Foreign Stat's, severally or combined. Such States may, as they have heretofore done, prolong and aggravate our unnatural and lamented strife, by exciting or maintaining the hopes of our disloyal citizens; but they cannot change our purpose to maintain the integrity of the Union, or defeat its accomplishment.

This Government will in all cases seasonably warn Foreign Powers of the injurious effect of any apprehended terference on their part; and having done this, it were sure its means of self-defence by the magnitude of the seasonable of the seasonabl

langers with which the country is threater Foreign nations need scarce'y to be reminded that family quarrels are always of short duration; that the ver quarrels are always of short duration; that the very secondal which they bring operates as an incentive to reconciliation. Much more does the unavoidable apprehension of foreign interference work in that direction. The emissaries of treason, who now remain in European capitals, will very soon disappear, and the whole American people will forever afterwards be a-king who among the foreign nations were the most just and the most forbearing to their country in its hour of trial.

It is the President's policy so to conduct our national affairs that all who have heretofore been our friends may abide in that relation. If any of them shall be lost, our regret will thus be modified by the reflection that the

regret will thus be modified by the reflection that the ereavement resulted from our misfortune and without

fault. I am, sir, your obedient servant.
WILLIAM H SEWARD. WM. L DAYTON, Esq., &. &c.

Mr. Seward to Mr. Dayton .- Extract.] DEPARTMENT OF STATE. Washington, December 5, 1862.

Six: Your despatch of November 18 (No. 227) has been received. Having already indicated the course which the President has decided to adopt concerning the late proceeding of the French Government, it is unnecessary for me now to review the note which, in the absence of instructions, you have written to M. Drouyn de L'Huys.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,
WILLIAM H. SEWARD, To WM. L. DAYTON, Esq . &c. &c. &c.

M. Seward to Mr. Dayton. DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

Washington, December 11, 1862.

Sir: Your despatch of November 25th (No. 231) has been received, together with the note which M. Drouyt de L. Huys addressed to you on the 23d of November, by of that month.

From my previous despatches you will probably have inferred that the President did not expect you to open a correspondence with M. Drouya de L'Huys upon the subect of the proposition concerning American affairs, which he Emperor has recently submitted to the Emperor of Russia and the Queen of Great Britain. Insemuch as yo have done so without consulting this Government, and have thus drawn forth from the Imperial Government a fraut and friendly asswer, it is only proper that you should now inform M. Drouyn de L'Huys that his note has been sub mitted to the President, and that he is graified with the explanations it gives of the present policy of the Emp ror in regard to the United States You are authorized, also, to inform M. Drough de L'Huys that this Government de sires now, no less sincerely than it has always done, to re tain and fortify its traditional relations with France, and that every proceeding which it shall have occasion to take in the conduct of international affairs shall manifest that spirit and no other. You are authorized further to say to M. Dreuyn de L'Huys that this Government appreciate M. Drouyn de L'Huys that this Government appreciates the assurance which the Emperor has given us of his willingness at a future time, if invited by it, to render his good offices towards forwarding a termination of the civil war in which we are so unhappily engaged, and that this assurance is received as a fresh demonstration of the same good-will and cordial triendship to our country upon which this Government and the American people have so

I am, sir, your obedient servant, WILLIAM H. SEWARD. To WM. L. DAYTON, Esq., &c. &c. &c.

Mr. Dayton to Mr. Seward .- [Extract] PARIS, DECEMBER 23, 1862. SIR: Your despatch of December 5tb (No. 265) is re

You simply acknowledged the receipt of my despatch of November 18th, (No. 227,) and say that, "having already indicated the course which the President has decided to adopt concerning the late proceeding of the French Gov-ernment, it is unnecessary for me now to review the note which, in the absence of instructions, you [1] have written to M Drouyn de L'Hoys."

I had supposed that that note, as it did not assume

indicate any policy, but merely to sum up bri-fly the successes of our army and governmental resources, in the hopes of its having weight in any future deliberation of this Government, could not fail at least to meet the approbation of the Department. My general instructi eld verbal conference with M. Drouyn de L'Huye subject before. He told me what he had done, and I could answer when perhaps the Government could not. The emergency, I thought, not only justified but required that, in view of the possible future I should put my verbal suggestions in writing. As one useful result, at all events, I have received the important communication of Mr. Drouyn de L. Huya of November last, a copy of which accompanied my despatch No. 231. I may add, also, that I felt that it was but just to myself that my countrymer, as well as the Government, should see and know that I had not failed in the crisis which had occurred, fairly to represent its

I am, sir, your obedient servant, WM. L. DAYTON. His Excellency WILLIAM H SEWARD, Secretary of State, &c. &c. &c.

Mr. Seward to Mr. Dayton .- [Extract.] DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

Washington, January 9, 1863.

Sir: Your despatch of December 23d (No. 246) has been submitted to the President. My recent despatches, especially No. 268, will have relieved you, I trust, of any concern about the caution which the President thought it prudent to observe, in the first instance, in relation to the note which you addressed to M. December 4.1. note which you addressed to M. Drouyu de L'Huys immediately after the publication of his correspondence with the Governments of Great Britain and Russia in relation to a proposed armistice was made. The note was opportune, and was judiciously conceived, and it has produced craffic results. gratifying results.

I am, sir, your obedient servant, WILLIAM H. SEWARD. To WILLIAM L. DAYTON, Esq , &c. &c. &c.

Mr. Dayton to Mr. Seward .- [Extracts.]

PARIS, JANUARY 15, 1863 Fig. A despatch will shortly be sens by M. Drouyn de L'Huys to M. Mercier, requesting him to suggest to you, on a seitable occasion, the propriety of appointing commissioners to treat with the South for peace, and for union, it possible; if not possible, for such terms of separation as may be mutually agreed upon.

This communication was submitted by M. Drouyn de L'Huys to the Emperor on the 9th instant, and returned to him by the Emperor yesterday.

If mays to the Emperor on the 3th instant, and returned to him by the Emperor yesterday.

The despatch answers what is supposed would have been the objections to a proposal for an armistice or mediation. Pirst, It proposes, it says, no interference of any kind by a foreign Power. Second. It does not require or ask any cessation of Lostilities pending the negotiation, but like the president of the proposal stantage. but, like the negotiation for peace in 1783 between us an Great Britain, permits every thing to proceed as if efforts for a settlement were being made. I am, sic, your ghedient servant,

W. L. DAYTON. His Excellency WM. H. SEWARD. Secretary of State, &c. &c.

Mr. L'Huys to M. Mercier .- [Translation.] DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN APPAIRS, Political Division, Paris, January 9, 1863.

Sin: If, in forming the purpose of assisting, by the prof-fer of our good offices to shorten the period of those hos-tilities which are desolating the American confinent, we had not been guided, beyond all, by the friendship which actuates the Government of the Emperor in regard to the United States, the little success of our overtures might chill the interest with which we follow the fluctuations of this contest. But the sentiment to which we have yielded is too sincere for indifference to find a place in our thoughts, and that we would cease to be painfully affected whilst the is too sincere for indifference to find a place in our thoughts, and that we would cease to be painfully affected whilst the war continues to rage. We cannot regard without profound regret this war, warse than civil, comparable to the most terrible distractions of the ancient Republics, and whose disasters multiply in proportion to the resources and the valor which each of the belligerent parties develop. The Government of his Majesty have, therefore, se-

riously examined the objections which have been made t us, where we have suggested the idea of a friendly medi-tion, and we have asked ourselves whether they are trail of a unture to set aside as premature every tentative to reconciliation. On one part has been opposed to us the repugnance of the United States to admit the intervention

the disposal of the belligerent parties to facilitate between them neget ations, the basis of which which we abstain from pr. judging, we have manifested to the patriotism of the United States all the considerations to which it is entitled, now perhaps still more than ever, after such a new proof of moral force and energy. We are none the less ready, amid the wishes which we form in favor of peace, to take into account all susception ties of national feeling, and we do not at all quuestion the right of the Federal Government to decline the co-operation (concours) of the great maritime Powers of Europe.

But this co-operation, is it not the only means which offers itself to the Cabinet of Washington to hasten the close of the war? And if it believes that it ought to repel any foreign intersention, could it not honorably accept the idea of direct informal conferences [pour parlers] with the authority which may represent the States of the South.

The Federal Government does no despair, we know, of giving a more active impulse to hostilities; its sacrifices have not exhausted its resources, still less its perseverance egot ations, the basis of which which we abstain

giving a more active impulse to hostilities; its sacrifices have not exhausted its resources, still less its perseverance and its steadfastness. The protraction of the strugg'e, in a word, has not shaken its confidence in the definite success of its efforts. But the opening of informal conferences between the belligerent parties does not necessarily imply the immediate crassition of hostilities. Negotiations about peace are not always the consequence of a suspension of warfare; they precede, on the contrary, more often the establishment of a truce. How many times have we not seen plenipotentiaries meet, exchange c mannications, agree upon all the essential provisions of treaties, resolve, in fine, the question even of peace or war, whilst the leaders of armies continued the strik and endeavored even to the latest moment to modify by force of arms the conditions of peace? To recall only one memory, drawn from the history of the United States—the negotiations which consecrated their independence were commenced long before host-lities had ceased in the New World, and the armistice was not established until the act of 30th November, 1862, which under the name of provisions articles embraced in advance the principal clauses of the definitive treaty of 1783.

Nothing, therefore, would hinder the Government of the United States, without renouncing the advantage which it believes it can attain by the continuation of the war, from entering upon informal conferences with the Confederates of the South, in case they should show themselectates of the South, in care they should show them-selves disposed thereto. Representatives or commissioners of the two parties could assemble at such point as it should be deemed proper to designate, and which could, for this purpose, be declared neutral. Reciprocal complaints would be examined into at this meeting. In place of the accusations which North and South mutually cast upon each other at this time would be substituted an assume each other at this time, would be substituted an argumen-tative discussion of the interes's which divide them. They would seek out by mea's of well ordered and profound celiberations whether these interests are definitively irreconcilable—whether separation is an extreme which can no longer be avoided or whether the memories of a common existence, whether the ties of any kind which have made of the North and of the South one sole and whole Federative State, and have borne them on to so high a degree of prosperity, are not more powerful than the causes which have piaced arms in the hands of the two populations. A negotiation, the object of which would be thus determinate, would not involve any of the objections raised against the diplomatic intervention of Europe, and, without giving bir.h to the same hopes as the immediate concluion of an armistice, would exercise a bappy influence or

the march of events. Why, therefore, should not a combination which re-pects all the relations of the United States obtain the approbation of the Federal Government? Persuaded on our part that it is in conformity with their true interests we do not hesitate to recommend it to their strention; and, not having sought in the project of a mediation of the maritime Powers of Europe any vain display of influence, we would applaud, with entire freedom form all susceptibility of self esteem, the opening of a negotiation which would invite the two populations to discuss, without the operation of Europe, the solution of their diff rences. I request you, sir, to give this assurance to the Cabine of Washington, while commending to its wisdom counsels dictated by most sincere interest in the prosperity of the United States. You are moreover authorized, if Mr. Seward expresses the wish, to leave with him a copy of this despatch.

Accept, sir, the assurance of my high consideration.

DROUYN DE L'HUYS. To M. MERCIER, Minister of France at Washington.

Mr. Seward to Mr. Dayton.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, Washington, F.bruary 6, 1863. SIR: The intimation given in your despatch of Januar 15th (No. 255) that I might expect a special visit from M. Mercier has been realized. He called on the 3t instant,

and gave me a copy of a despatch which he had just then rec ived from M. Drouyn de L'Huys under the date of the 9th of January.

I have taken the President's instructions, and I now

I have taken the Freedent's instructions, and I now proceed to give you his views upon the subject to question. It has been considered with seriou-ness, resulting from the reflection that the people of France are known to be faultless abserts with the American nation in the misfor-tunes and calamities of our unbappy c vil war; nor do we on this, any more than on other occasions, forget the tra-ditional friendship of the two countries, which we unhesitatingly believe has inspired the counsels, that M. Drouyn de L'Huys has imparted. He says, "the Federal Government does not despair, w

again he remarks. "the protraction of the struggle, in a word, has not shaken the co fidence (of the Federal Government) in the definitive success of its efforts."

These passings seem to me to do un ntentional injustice to the language, whether confidential or public, in which this Government has constantly spoken on the subject of the war. It certainly has had and avowed only one purpos—a determination to preserve the integrity of the country. So far from admitting any laxity of effort, or betraying any despondency, the Government has, on the contrary, borne it-elf cheerfully in all vicinstudes with unwavering confidence in an early and compl-te tramph the national cause. Now, when we are, in a manner, in-vited by a friendly Power to review the twen y one months' h story of the conflict, we find no occasion to abate that confidence. Through such an alternation of the ories and defeats as is the appointed incident of every war, the land and naval forces of the United States have steadily advanced, reclaiming from the injurgents the ports, forts, and posts which they had treacherously seized before the said actually began, and even before it was seriously appropended. So many of the States and deven before it was seriously appropended. bended. So many of the States and d stricts which the in-surgents included in the field of their projected exclusive slavehoding dominions have already been re-established under the flag of the Union, that they now retain only the States of Georgia, Alabama, and Texas, with half of Vit

States of Georgia, Alabama, and rexas, with hair of Virginia, half of North Carolina, two thirds of South Carolina, half of Mississippi, and one-third respectively of Arkaneas and Louisiana. The national forces hold even this small territory in close blockade and siege.

This Governm n', if required, d es not hesitate to submit its achievements to the test of comparison; and it maintains that in no part of the world, and in no times, and it maintains that in no part of the world, and in no times, and

maintains that in no part of the world, and in no times, ancienter modern, has a nation, when rendered all unready for combat by the erjoyment of eighty years of almost unbroken peace, so quickly awakened at the alarm of sedition, put forth energies so vigorous, and achieved successes so signal and effective as those which have marked the progress of this contest on the part of the Union.

M Drouyn de L'Huys, I fear, has taken other I got than the correspondence of this Government for his guidance in secertaining its temper and firomess. He has probably read of divisions of sentiment among those who hild themselves torth as organs of public opinion here, and has given read of divisions of sentiment among those who hild them-selves torth as organs of public opinion here, and has given to them an undue importance. It is to be remembered that this is a nation of thirry millions, civilly divided into forty one States and Territories, which cover an expanse hardly less than Europe; that the people are a pure demo-cracy, exercising every where the utmost freedom of speech and suffrage; that a great crisis necessarily pro-duces vehement as well as projound debate, with share duces vehement as well as profound debate, with sharp collisions of individual, local, and sectional interests, senti-ments, and ambit ons; and that this heat of controversy is ments, and ambit ons; and that this heat of controversy is increased by the intervent on of speculations, interests, prejudices, and passions from overy other part of the civilized world. It is, however, through such debates that the agreement of the nation upon any subject is habitually attained, its resolutions formed, and its policy established. While there has been such difference of popular opinion and favor concerning the agents who shall carry on the war, the principles on which it shall be waged, and the means with which it shall be prosecuted, M. Drouyn de L'Huss has only to refer to the statute-book of Concress L'Huys has only to refer to the statute-book of Congress and the Executive ordinances to learn that the national activity has hitherto been, and yet it, as efficient as that of any other nation, whatever its form of government, ever any other nation, whatever its form of government, ever was, under circumstates of equally grave import to its peace, asfety, and welfare. Not one voice has been made any where, out of the immediate field of the insurrection, in tavor of foreign intervention, of mediation, of arbitration, or of compromise, with the relinquishment of one accept the national domain, or the surrender of even one constitutional franchise. At the same time, it is manifest to the world that our r. son ces are yet abundant, and our

what M. Dr. up de L'Hava suggesta is that this Government shall appoint commissioners to meet, on neutral ground, commissioners of the injurgents. He supposes that in the conferences to be thus held reciprocal complaints a uld be discussed, and in place of the accusations which the North and South now mutually oust upon each other the conferees would be engaged with discussions of the interests which divide them. He assumes, farther that the commissioners would seek, by means of well-order d and profound deliberation, who her these interests ordered and profound deliberation, who her these interests are definitively irreconcilable, whether separation is an extreme that can no longer be avoided, or whether the memories of a common existence, the ties of every kind which have made of the North and the South one whole Federative State, and have borne them on to so high a degree of prosperity, are not more powerful than the causes which have placed arms in the hands of the two populations. The suggestion is not an extraordinary one, and it may well have been thought by the Emperor of the French, in the earnestness of his benevolent desire for the restoration

shall come to review it in the light in which it must necessarily be examined in this c untry I think he can hard! feil to perceive that it amounts to nothing less than a pro-position that, while this Government is engaged in sup-pressing an armed insurrection, with the purpose of main taining the constitutional national au horsey, and preserving the integrity of the country, it shall enter into diplomatic

discussion with the insurgents upon the questions whether that authority shall not be recounced, and whether the country shall not be delivered over to disunion, to be quickly followed by ever increasing anarchy.

If it were possible for the G-vernment of the United States to compromise the national authority so far as to enter into such debates, it is not easy to perceive what good results count he obtained by them. good results cou d be obtained by them.

The commissioners must agree in recommending either that the Union shall stand, or that it shall be voluntarily dissolved; or else they must leave the vital question un settled, to ab de at last the fortunes of the war. I ernment has not shut cut knowle ge of the temper, any more than of the past purposes of the insur-gents. There is not the least ground to suppose that the controling actors would be persuaded at this in ment, by any arguments which national commissioners could offer to forego the ambition that has impelled them to the disby all position that has impelled them to the dis-leyal position they are occupying. Any commissioners who should be appointed by these actors, or through their dictation or influence, must enter the conference imbued with the spirit and pledged to the personal fortunes of the insurgent chiefs. The loyal people in the insurrectionary States would be unheard, and any offer of peace by this Government, on the condition of the maintenance of the Union, must necessarily be rejected.

On the other hand, as I have already intimated, this Go

verament has not the least thought of elinquishing the trust which has been confided to it by the nation under the most solemn of all political sanctions; and if it had any such solemn of all political sanctions; and if it had any such thought, it would still have abundant reason to know that peace proposed at the cost of dissolution would be immediately, unreservedly, and indignantly rejected by the American people. It is a great mistake that European statemen make, if they suppose this people are demorshized. Whatever, in the case of an insurrection, the people of France, or of Great Britain, or of Switzerland, or of the Netherlands would do to save their national existence, no matter how the strife in ght be regarded by or might affect toreign nations, just so much, and certainly no less, the people of the United States will do, if necessary to save for the common benefit the region which is bounded by the Pacific and the Atlantic coasts, and by the shores of the Guils of St. Lawrence and Mexico, together with the free and common navigation of the Rio Grande, Misseuri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Ohio, St. Lawrence, Hudson, Dela-ware, Potomac, and other natural highways by which this land, which to them is at once a land of inheritance and a land of promise, is opened and watered. Even if the agents of the American people now exercising their power should, through tear or faction, tall below this height of the national virtue, they would be speedily, yet constitutionally, replaced by others of sterner character and patriotism.

I must be allowed to say, also, that M. Drowyn de L'Huys errs in his description of the parties to the present conflict. We have been in the selfcinal sense to North

conflict. We have here, in the political sense, no North and South, no Northern and Southern States. We have an insurrectionary par y, which is located chiefly upon and adjacent to the shore of the Gulf of Mexico; and we have on the other hand, a loyal people who constitute not only Northern States, but also Eastern, Midd e, Western, and I have on many occasions heretofore submitted to the

French Government the President's views of the interests, and the ideas more effective for the time than even interests, which lie at the bottom of the determination of the American Government and people to maintain the Federal Union. The President has done the same thing in his nessages and other public declarations. I ref ain, therefore, from reviewing that argument in connexion wi h the

Mr. D.ouya de uyo de L'Huys draws to his aid the conferences which took place between the Colonies and Great Britain in our Revolutionary War. He will allow us to assume that action in the criss of a nation must accord with its necessities and therefore can seldom be conformed to precedents. Great Britain, when entering on the negotiations, had manifestly come to entertain doubts of her ultimate success; and it is certain that the councils of the Colonies could not fail to take new courage, if not to gain other advantage when the parent State compromised so far as to treat of peace on the terms of conceding their in-

It is true indeed that peace must come at some time and that conferences must attend, if they are not allowed to precede the pac fication. There is, however, a better form for such conferences than the one which M. Drouys de L'Huys suggests. The latter would be palpably in de-rogation of the Constitution of the United States, and would carry no we ght because destrict of the sanction necessary to bind either the disloyal or the loyal portions of the people. On the other hand, the Congress of the United States furnishes a constitutional forum for debates between the alienated parties. Senators and Representa tives from the loyal portion of the people are there already, freely empowered to conf r; and seats also are vacant, and inviting Senators and Representatives of this disconty and binding force of organic law. Such conferences between the alienated parties may be said to have already began. Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and dissouri-States which are claimed by the insurgents-

by M. Drouyn de L'Hu, s, namely, that while an accession to the latter, would bring this Government into a concurrence with the insurgents in dist garding and setting asile an important part of the Constitution of the United States, and so would be of perceious example, the Congressional conference, on the contrary, preserves and gives new strength to that ascred writing which must continue through future ages the sheet anchor of the Republic.
You will be at liberty to read this despatch to M. Drouyn

e L'Huys, and to give him a copy if he shall desire it. To the end that you may be informed of the whole case, transmit a copy of M. Dronyn de L'Huya's despatch. I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD. WASHINGTON ITEMS DISPATCHED NORTH.

THE NEW OPPOSITION ORGANIZATION. The confirming power of the Government is ready for the nominations to office that are relied on to build up the newly-batched Democratic-Republican Conservative party; ready, but not hospitable.

GEN. COCHRANE AND GEN. BURNSIDE'S PLANS. When examined by the Committee on the Conduct of the War in regard to his alleged interference with the plans and movements of Gen. Burnside, Gen. John Cochrane testified that he, at the time of his interview with the President, kness of no plans, and could not speak of any, nor wittingly interfere with any contemplated moveany, nor wittingly interfere with any contemplated move-ments of the army, because he was not aware of any. He all, are on board the Alabama, which called in to land them had simply, under the pressure of a sense of duty, communicated to the President facts within his knowledge repecting the feelings, opinions, and condition of a portion of the army. He said he should have thought it little less than treasonable to have repressed those facts at the criti-cal period when he communicated them.

The President to-day nominated Brigadier Genera's Stonem-n and Burus to be Major Generals. He has also sent in a list of about one hundred and fifty Hospital Chaplains, most of whom have already been drawing pay for several months. The Military Committee will probably report against them.

COMMANDER PREBLE. Commander Proble, recently dismissed from the navy for permitting the entrance of the rebel steamer Oreto into Mobile, has been nominated for restoration to his rank in the service. Com. Roger Perry has also been nomi-

The report of the Committee on Territories made by Senator Wade to-day, in answer to a resolution, shows that the Utah Leg slature suppressed the message of the Governor of that Territory; that no freedom of suffrage is allowed or opposit on tolgrated in opposition to the church dignitaries; that polygamy is practiced to the extent of incest; that there is no law giving redoess to the abuses of the marriage relation; and the Mormons are openly inimical to the Government of the United States, though, in popular phrase, steadfast adherents to the Constitution. AFFAIRS IN UTAH.

BILLS TO BE REPORTED.

Bills have been prepared, and only want an opportunity to be reported, from the Select Committee on Emancipa-ien, appropriating \$10,000,000 for the abolishment of siav-cry in Marylani: \$1,500,000 to Western Virginia, and 7450,000 to D.laware for sim lar purpo ea in those States. The committee have also agreed up in a bill to establish a Beard of Emigration and Colonization in connection with the War Department.

SUPPRESSION OF NEWSPAPERS. The country may be congratulated upon the prospect of Governmental repression of the circulation through the trmy of the Potonne of the distoyal daily newspapers of THE LATE NAVAL FIGHT IN THE GULF.

Lieut. Com. BLAKE, who was in command of the United States steamer Hatteras at the time of her late encounte with the Confederate steamer Alabama in the Gulf of Mexico, has firwarded to the Navy Department the suboined official report of that unfortunate affair :

UNITED STATES CONSULATE, Kingston, Jamaice, January 21, 1863.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of Navy. Sin: It is my painful duty to inform the Department of the destruction of the United States Steamer Hatters, re-cently under my command, by the Confederate steamer Alabama, on the night of the 11th instant, off the coast of Texas. The circumstances of the sad disaster are as

Upon the afternoon of the 11th instant, at half-past 3 'clock, while at anchor, in company with the fleet under Commodore Bell, iff Galveston, Texas, I was ordered, by a signal from the United States flagship Brooklyn, to chase a sail to the southward and eastward.

I got under way immediately, and steamed with all speed in the direction indicated. After some time the strange sail could be seen from the Hatteras, and was accretained to be a steamer, which fact I communicated to the flagship by signal.

by signal I continued the chase, and rapidly gained on the suspi cious vessel. Knowing the slow rate of speed of the Hatterss, I at once suspected that deception was being practised, and hence ordered the ship to be cleared for action, with every thing in readiness for a determined attack and a vigorous defence. When within about four miles of the vessel, I observed that she had ceased to steam and was

lying "broadside on" swaiting us. It was nearly seven o'clock, and quit dark, but, notwi hetanding the obscurity of the night, I felt assured from the general character of the vessel and her manguvring that I should soon encounter the rebel steamer Alabama.

Being able to work but four guns up one side of the Hatteras—two short 32-pounders, one 30-pounder rifled Parrott gun, and one 20-pounder rifled gun—I concluded to close with her, in order that my guns might be effective if necessary. I came within easy speaking range, (about seventy-five yards.) and upon asking, "What steamer is that?" received the answer, "Her Britannic Majesty's ship Vixeo." I replied that I would send a boat aboard, and immediately gave the order.

and immediately gave the order.

In the mean time the stranger was endeavoring to gain a desirable position for a raking fire. Almost simultaneously with the "piping away" of the boat, the stranger craft again replied, "We are the Confederate steamer Alabama," which was accompanied with a broadside. I at the same moment returned the fire.

Being aware of the many vulnerable points of the Hatterse, I hoped by closing with the Alabama to be able to board her, and thus rid the seas of this piratical craft. I steered directly for the Alabama, but she was enabled by her great speed, and the foulness of the bottom of the Hatters, and consequently her diminished speed, to thwart my attempt.

consequently her diminished speed, to thwart my attempt, when I had gained a distance of but thirty yards of her. At this range musket and pistol shots were exchanged, and At this range musace and pictol snots were exchanged, and the firing continued with great vigor on both sides. At length a shell entered amidship in the hold, setting fire to it, and at the same instant, as I can hardly divide the time, a shell pa-sed through the "sick bay," exploding in an adjoining compartment, also producing fire; another entered the cylinder, filling the engine-room and deck with steam, and depriving me of all power to manguare the vessel, or to work the numer mean than the selection of the or to work the pump, upon which the reduction of the fi

depended.
With the vessel on fire in two places, and beyond human power a hopel as week upon the water, with her waiking beam shot away and her engine rendered urcless, I still maintained an active fire, with a double hope of disabling the Alabama or of attracting the attention of the fleet off Galveston, which was only twenty-eight miles distant.

It was soon reported to me that the shells had entered the Hatteras at the water line, tearing off entire she

iron, and that the water was rushing in, utterly defring every attempt to remedy the evil, and that she was rapidly Learning this melancholy truth, and observing that the

Alabama was on my port bow, entirely beyond range of my guns, doubtless preparing for a raking fire of the decks, I selt that I had no right to sacrifice uselessly and without any desirable result the lives of all under my command.

To prevent the blowing up of the Hatteras from the fire, which we was the common of the com which was making much progress, I ordered the magazine to be flooded, and afterwards a lee gun to be fired. The Alabama then asked if assistance was desired, to which an

Alabama then asked it assistance was affirmative an wer was given.

The Hatteras wes now rapidly going down, and in order to save the lives of my officers and men. I caused the armament on the port side to be thrown overboard. Had I not done so, I am confident that the vessel would have with many brave hearts and valuable lives. Afgone down with many brave hearts and valuable lives. Af-ter considerable delay, caused by a report that a steamer was seen coming from Galveston, the Alabama sent us aswas seen certain from Calveston, the Alabama cert in assistance; and I have the pleasure to inform the Department that every living being was conveyed safely from the Hatteras to the Alabama.

Ten minutes after leaving the Hatteras she went down,

and inviting Senators and Representatives of this discontent that the content is the content of the content in the property who may be constitutionally sent there from the States involved in the insurrection. Moreover, the confersences which can thus be held in Congress have this great advantage over any that could be organized upon the plan of M. Drouyn de L'Huys, namely: That the Congress, if it were thought wise, could call a National Convention to it were thought wise, could call a National Convention to the congress of this discontent in the property of the policy of the property of the propert

one 68 pounder, and one 24-pounder rifled gun.

The great supernority of the Alabama, with her powerful battery, and her machinery, &c., under the water line, must be at once recognised by the Department, who are familiar with the construction of the Hatteras, and her Misseuri—States which are already represented in Congress, and submitting with perfect freedom and in a proper spirit their advice upon the course best calculated to bring about, in the shortest time, a firm, lasting, and honorable peace. Representatives have been sent also from Louisanas, and others are understood to be coming from Arkanasa.

There is a preponderating argument in favor of the Congressional form of conference over that which is suggested by M. Dronve de L'Hujs, namely, that while an accession of the conduct of Assistant Surgeon Edward S. Mathews, both during the action and afterwards, in attention to the wounded, demands my unqualified comtotal unfitne s for a contest with a regularly built vessel-ofin attention to the wounded, demands my unqualified com-mendation. I would also bring to the two rable notice of the Department Acting Master's Mate F. J. McGrath,

temporarily performing duty as gunner. Owing to the darkness of the night and the peculiar construction of the Hatteras, I am able only to refer to the conduct of those officers who came under my especial attention, but from the character of the contest and the amount of damage done to the Alabama, I have personally no reason to believe that any officer failed in his duty. To the men of the Hat. teras I cannot give too much praise; their enthusiaem an bearing was of the highest order. I enclose the report of Assistant Surgeon Edward S. Matthews, by which you will observe that five men have teen wounded and two killed; the missing, it is hoped,

have reached the fleet at Galveston. I shall communicate to the Department in a separate report the movements of myself and command from the time of our transfer to the Alabama until the departure of the earliest mail from this place to the United States.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant, H. C. BLAKE, Lieutenant Commander U. S. Navy.

THE ALABAMA AT KINGSTON.

From the King ton (Jamaica) Journal of January 22. The Confederate steamer-of war Alabama, eight guns, Capt. Semmes, arrived at Port Royal on Tuesday ev nii g. Jenuary 20, from a cruise. She reports having captured and destroyed the Federal gunboat Hatterns off Galveston.

and obtain supplies.

The object of the Alabama's visit was soon made known. The object of the Alabama's visit was soon made known. It appears that the was hard pressed by the fleet sent out for her capture, and when off Galveston Commodore Semmes conceived the p'an of making one of the intended desolators desolate. The gunboat Hatteras was in full chase, and the Alabama than turned head and pretended to be running away, and thus deluded her pursuer into following up the chase. At last she turned round and prepared for battle, sending into the Hatteras a broadside, which such her in thirteen minutes. She took off the officers and crew and came late Port Royal for the purpose of landing them. They were handed over to the American of landing them. They were handed over to the American Consul, and Semmes then proceeded to Spanish Town to obtain the Lieutenaut Governor's permission to refit his ship before leaving. Another statement is that she carried French colors and only made known who she really was when she came up with the Hatterns and was prepared to give her a broadside. The Alabama has certainly been secretal videled.

severely riddled. The Alabama is consigned to Mesars. Charles Levy & Co., of this city, and is now receiving coals, &c., at Port Royal, from Messrs. T. D. Pasa & Co.

From the Kingston Standard of January 24 We have been reque ted to state that Capt. Semmes, of the Confederate steamer-of-war Alabama, will be at the Commercial Exchange at twelve o'clock to-day, and will receive the respects of any gentlemen who may be desir-ous of meeting him.

From the Standard of January 26.

According to announcement Gapt. Semmes, of the Confederate States steamer-of-wer Atabams, was introduced on Saturday, at noon, to a number of merchants and other gentlemen of this city at the Commercial Exchange. The room was crowded to excess, and after the gallant Captain had been cordially welcomed, three cheers were proposed for Captain Semmes and the Alabams, which were lustify responds to, upon which the Captain returned the company his graveful thanks for the reception he had met with in an elequent speech, in the course of which he referred to the great struggle at present going on in America, assuring his hearers that the Confederate States were determined to prosecute the war, not for the perpetuation of slavery, but for their independence, and for freetrade intercourse with all the world. Three more cheers were given for Captain Semmes and the Alabams, and the gentlemen separated.